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Pentagon Links Soviet Arms Gains To Some Exports

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WASHINGTON — A Pentagon report linked recent improvements in Soviet weapons to a systematic collection of Western technology by a network of Soviet agencies and such countries as East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria.

The report, based on a two-year study by defense and intelligence analysts, could strengthen the Pentagon's arguments for tightening controls on the export of sensitive products to the Soviet bloc. Richard Perle, assistant defense secretary for international security policy, said the findings could help convince wavering allied governments of the high cost of technology leakage.

The report singled out 79 applications by American companies to export products to the Soviet bloc in 1983-84. It said that if the applications, which the Pentagon denied, had been approved, the Soviets could have saved \$6.6 billion to \$13.3 billion in development costs. The Western alliance, in turn, would have had to spend an additional \$7.3 billion just to counter the advantages that the Soviets could have acquired, the document asserted.

The report said that the Soviet acquisition program is directed by a cabinet-level Military-Industry Commission and executed by ostensibly civilian institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Soviet Academy of Sciences. If the Soviets can't buy the technology legally, they try to obtain it illegally through the KGB and other espionage agencies, the report added.

The study of the 79 export-license cases also asserted that the Soviets sometimes try to mask their objectives by having other Warsaw Pact countries apply for the purchase of several apparently unrelated

products that combined could give the entire bloc a rapid advance in microelectronics, computers and assembly-line automation.

The report identified 14 key technologies sought by Soviets. These include assembly-line robotics, computers, lasers and microwave transmission, radar, missile guidance, semiconductor production, genetic engineering for biological warfare, and aircraft and spacecraft design.

All these product categories are banned for export to the Soviet bloc. However, the Pentagon contends that through earlier legitimate trade and suspected thefts, the Soviets could have obtained enough of such know-how to improve an array of strategic and conventional weapons including nuclear-powered submarines, cruise missiles, airborne warning systems, and laser-guided bombs.

The Pentagon report, however, got mixed reviews from U.S. technology producers. "No one in the industry has any quarrel with keeping the hard-core stuff away from the Soviets," said Ed Black, vice president of the Washington-based Computer and Communications Industries Association. "But what seems missing from the report is an analysis of the cost to U.S. producers in sales lost from applying controls too widely."

The Pentagon has recommended that restrictions be placed on technology trade with friendly countries to cut off channels of suspected diversion to the Soviet bloc.